

# **North Somerset Council**

## **Report to the Executive**

**Date of Meeting: 19 October 2022**

**Subject of Report: Living Well With COVID**

**Town or Parish:**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Matt Lenny, Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services**

**Key Decision: No**

### **Reason:**

No expenditure implications and estimated low impacts on communities in North Somerset

### **Recommendations**

To note content of the plan for 2022/23 which replaces the Local Outbreak Management Plan required by government guidance in 2020/21 and 2022/23.

#### **1. Summary of Report**

In February 2022, the COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 national plan was published. This document outlined the removal of the remaining legal domestic restrictions and set out how the country will live with COVID-19 while maintaining population resilience and protection for those most at risk.

It is against this background that North Somerset Council has developed the North Somerset Living Well with COVID-19 strategy. This replaces the previous North Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan and sets a framework for how we will continue to prevent, protect, treat and respond to COVID-19 in North Somerset.

#### **2. Policy**

The United Kingdom (UK) Government published a series of policies in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. First was the Coronavirus: Action Plan on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020. The UK experienced restrictions on normal life including three lockdowns over the two years that followed. On February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 the Government began a phased reduction of restrictions and published their document known as the 'Roadmap out of Lockdown'. In February 2022, the COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 national plan was published which removed remaining legal domestic restrictions and demobilised several parts of the national COVID-10 response structures.

Local authorities have a duty to assure themselves that appropriate health protection plans and response mechanisms are in place to protect the health of the local population. This plan supports the discharge of that duty and replaces the previous Local Outbreak Management Plan that became out of date due to the shifts in national policy. It also

supports commitments in the NSC Corporate Plan to minimise the harm from COVID-19 and support the recovery of individuals, families and communities.

### **3. Details**

The UK COVID-19 vaccination programme started in December 2020. Starting with the most vulnerable, the UK population was offered protection from the virus. The majority of the public were also willing to test for the virus and self-isolate if they tested positive, limiting transmission while the NHS worked to vaccinate and protect as many people as possible. While the risk from COVID-19 has not gone away, it has reduced over time and the proportion of people becoming seriously ill with COVID-19 has fallen to the point that most of the restrictions implemented in response to the pandemic have now been removed.

The NSC Living Well with COVID document sets out an overview of how we will continue to manage the transmission of the virus while reducing the risk that it continues to present. To achieve this, the document summarises four key areas of focus; prevention, protection, treatment and response; all of which are underpinned by a continued commitment to surveillance, communication and engagement.

### **4. Consultation**

Our NSC Public Health team has worked with and will continue to consult with relevant partners and stakeholders in the development and delivery of this plan. The team use a pool of expertise, resources, skills and expertise to coordinate COVID-19 activities across North Somerset.

Partners include:

- Schools
- Care homes
- Businesses
- Voluntary sector organisations
- UK Health Security Agency
- Health and Social care teams
- NHS England
- Resident groups across North Somerset
- North Somerset Council departments
- External regulatory bodies
- Other Local authorities

### **5. Financial Implications**

There are no specific implications for the Council although managing the impact of COVID well is important because of the impact it can have on staffing, service delivery and outcomes for people in our communities.

#### **Costs**

All local authorities received funding under the Contain Outbreak Management Fund for 2020/21 and 2021/22. Given the ongoing nature of the challenges associated with COVID in the community the funding allocated has been carried forward into 2022/23. This is funding a small covid response team within the Public Health and Regulatory Services Directorate as well as wider capacity and capability in existing teams.

#### **Funding**

Grant funding from the Department of Health and Social Care has been provided to support the local response. Measures outlined in the NSC Living Well with COVID document will be

supported by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund that has been carried forward from financial year 2021 to 2022 and will be reviewed when this funding is expected to end in March 2023.

## **6. Legal Powers and Implications**

Regulations have changed significantly during the course of the pandemic and will be kept under review if any new guidance is published.

## **7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

No specific implications for the NSC response. There are associated impacts from use of PPE and testing materials and the use of these interventions will vary according to latest guidance and impacts of the virus.

## **8. Risk Management**

The Living with Covid Plan is designed to proactively help manage risks in our community and to the delivery of NSC services and programmes.

## **9. Equality Implications**

No EIA produced.

Within the delivery of the plan there are additional measures to mitigate impacts on higher risk communities, for example, additional outreach clinics used to encourage vaccine uptake in some population groups by geography, ethnicity etc.

## **10. Corporate Implications**

The plan supports delivery of the fair ambition of the Corporate Plan by providing protection for our local population and mitigating risk for those who may be more vulnerable to infection or the impacts of the virus.

## **11. Options Considered**

The plan is not a formal requirement from government guidance but has been developed as a sensible way to plan and coordinate action.

### **Authors:**

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### **Appendices:**

North Somerset: Living Well with COVID Plan – October 2022

### **Background Papers:**

The [North Somerset Local Outbreak Management Plan \(2021-22\)](#) will be replaced by this document